

5 Languages You Should Consider Studying

Which languages will help me get a job? Which languages are going to become globally relevant? Which languages are the most useful? ***Which language should I learn?***

Unfortunately, the only real answers to these questions are going to be entirely dependent on your own personal motivations and interests and should not be limited to those that I have listed. Regardless of your thoughts on these languages it never hurts to learn some facts that might nudge you in one direction or another.

Knowing which languages will be key to global communications in the years to come is an advantage that many of us seek to have. I've heard from countless language learners who always have a short (and sometimes not so short) list of languages that they plan on learning one day. Others simply want to accumulate new languages but have no idea [how](#) or where to begin or what to choose.

It's not my place to tell you which languages you should or should not be interested in for doing so might seem to imply that I believe in the superiority of certain languages over others - and let me assure you that I do not. In this post I'll attempt to share with you a few suggestions worth mulling over and looking into if you're up in the air about what to pursue, or teetering on the fence about taking up one or more of these already.

1) German, as one of the most influential languages in Europe now plays an incredibly crucial role within the spheres of global economics and science. Germany has one of the world's strongest (and growing) economies, ranking as the world's second largest exporter. German is the 2nd most relevant language today within the scientific community and a huge amount of international science professors recommend that their students pursue the German language.

According to the [University of Portsmouth](#), 40% of American scientists make this recommendation and over 70% of Polish and Hungarian scientists suggest likewise (though proximity to Germany and EU membership is probably a strong influence).

Also of significant importance is the long history of literature, poetry and philosophical works to have been written in German. An [estimated 18%](#) of the world's books are written in German, the vast majority of it never having been translated into English.

No matter how you slice it, [German is an excellent choice](#) for those uncertain of what to study and the potential value that it could bring a new speaker is only likely to increase..

2) French may seem to many of us Americans like more of a historical language on its way out the door, and indeed the unfortunate [trend of language and humanities budget](#) cuts in schools and universities does seem to indicate the steady decrease in apparent value that we place on the French language.

A recent statement by prominent linguist John McWhorter titled "[Lets Stop Pretending that French is an Important Language](#)" raised a lot of controversy and Francophile backlash when it was published in February. McWhorter's statement was in response to New York City's new initiative to emphasize French instruction in its schools, a move that was both praised and decried by residents of the city.

In any case, a fair amount of recent data indicates that French may in fact be more important than we are giving it credit for. While the obvious trend in the US right now is Spanish -the 2nd most widely spoken language on Earth by speaker count - it may not stay that way. French may in fact be poised to become a linguistic superpower in the coming decades.

A recent [article](#) from Forbes suggests that French is experiencing widespread growth in former colonial nations - particularly Sub-Saharan Africa. These countries are experiencing or are expected to experience a increase in growth and global interaction.

One study by investment bank Natixis suggests that by 2050 French could be spoken by more than 750 million people worldwide, with the potential for being much greater a number, surpassing English and potentially even Mandarin as the most widely spoken language on Earth.

So how's that for useless McWhorter?

In case a language being widespread isn't sufficient reason to learn a language for you - and perhaps it shouldn't be the most important factor - there's a plethora of other reasons why French is a great tongue to know.

France has a long history of being a center of arts and culture. The French film industry is revered the world over for being the birthplace of cinema and the creator of some of film's [greatest](#) early legends.

Furthermore - [it's easy](#). Well, okay it isn't easy. No language is especially easy, but compared to many others French isn't nearly as bad as it may seem up front. Sure, the pronunciation may seem at first glance like the stuff of nightmares, but you may find yourself surprised at how easy it is to grasp after a day or two of choking on your own tongue.

Due to the heavy influences of Norman French on the English language you may be shocked quickly by the number of words that aren't all that different from their English counterparts.

3) Portuguese may come as a surprise to many readers - but it shouldn't. As the 6th largest language by speaker count, Portuguese boasts almost 260 *million* speakers - most of whom reside in Brazil. Let me tell you - Brazil's [economy is no joke](#). As the country firmly cements itself as an international business power, bringing in foreign investors like nowhere else, we find that the need for Portuguese language skills increasing exponentially.

But it's not just about Brazil. Portuguese is the third most commonly spoken European language, behind English and Spanish and along with its Iberian neighbor (I'm talking about Spanish) is growing faster in the EU than any other language - including English.

Another language with a long history of colonialism and exploration, Portuguese [can be found](#) on four continents - South America, Africa, Asia and of course Europe. It is an official language in 9 countries and is commonly found in many others, including Luxembourg of all places, despite lacking official status.

Spanish and Portuguese are quite close as far as languages go - with some speakers claiming mutual intelligibility. If you already speak Spanish you're going to have a strong [advantage](#) going into a Portuguese learning project, and I imagine the reverse is equally true as a Portuguese speaker learning Spanish.

Speaking the two languages offers you the awesome ability to travel - and speak - throughout all of Central and South America, as well, as we said, in other countries around the world.

Furthermore it is said that Portuguese speakers love hearing foreigners attempt to speak their language. The consensus seems to be that some of the friendliest countries in the world are Portuguese speaking. Brazil ranks quite high as one of the most welcoming countries to foreigners, good news for the flocks of tourists and investors. But Brazil still falls far behind Portugal, [ranked](#) 7th overall in the world for friendliest nation towards visitors. That's pretty high.

However, if you visit Brazil, you may consider staying away from Spanish speaking neighbor Bolivia. According to [this](#), Bolivians are among the least welcoming.

4) Indonesian probably isn't the first language that many of us think about when we consider learning a second language either, but that oversight might be misplaced. Indonesian is spoken by over 300 million people in Southeastern Asia and is [said](#) to be mutually intelligible with the languages of Malaysia and Singapore, further increasing the number of speakers with whom a learner of Indonesian could unlock communications.

Again I have to state that no language is especially easy to learn, and the language difficulty relies on too many things to make it easily quantifiable. That said, Indonesian doesn't appear to be an especially difficult language to learn by English speaker standards.

With no tenses, genders, or tones, and a simple SVO word order, Indonesian instantly ranks in my opinion as being easier than many other Asian languages - most of which are famous for being especially difficult for English speakers to learn.

Not going to visit Indonesia any time soon? That's not really an issue. Indonesia's internet culture is bigger than ever! Finding people to speak to via Skype or Google Hangouts would be a snap!

As English is becoming increasingly popular as a 2nd language in Indonesia and the number of speakers and foreign investors increases, finding individuals interested in language exchange has never been easier. LATG can also boast a significant Indonesian fan base, Jakarta in particular is one of the cities with the most fans on our [Facebook page](#)!